

friend—and why I appreciate his strong support for the veterans of our Nation.●

PAST POLITENESS

Mr. SIMON. Mr. President, Colbert King, a member of the editorial page staff of the Washington Post, recently wrote an op-ed piece about a group of young people who are meeting to establish greater understanding.

It may seem like a small thing to many people, but it is precisely what needs to happen in our country.

I remember many years ago speaking to the Hillel Foundation at the University of Illinois. This is the Jewish student organization there.

It was an anniversary of some sort, and I suggested, among other things, that since at the University of Illinois there were people of both Jewish and Arab backgrounds that a few students getting together regularly might really contribute something. One of the students present said that would be meaningless but, interestingly, a few of the students got together and, for at least a short period of time, held some regular meetings between American Jews, Israeli Jews, and students from Arab countries. These were simply informal discussions long before President Sadat made his dramatic visit to the Knesset in Israel.

I wish I could report to you that something dramatic came out of these student meetings. I do not know that anything came out of them, other than one extremely important thing—greater understanding.

We are in a world that needs that, and I would like more people to read the op-ed by Colbert King, which I ask to be printed in the RECORD.

The op-ed follows:

[From the Washington Post, Dec. 2, 1995]

PAST POLITENESS AND INTO HONESTY

(By Colbert I. King)

While countless adults have been living out the year clenching their teeth by day and hyperventilating at home by night over one racially tinged issue or another, a small group of youngsters have been quietly making sure they don't end up leading the same kind of lives. Seventeen area high school students—nine African American and eight Jewish—have been meeting since January to build a future in which their generation will live without alienation and bitterness. What they have achieved in 12 months should put us to shame.

In a town that worships influence and power, these young people have neither. But when it comes to tolerance, trust, and having friendships that cut across racial and religious lines, they're up there with the best of their elders. Not that they started out that way.

When they joined the first class of Operation Understanding, D.C.—a fledgling non-profit organization out to revive the historical relationship between Jews and African Americans through young people—many carried the same heavy baggage that adults well into their autumn years still lug around. To be sure, they were bright, curious, committed to their community, and loaded with leadership potential—all the things Operation Understanding, D.C., was seeking. But

they also tracked in a fair amount of ignorance, suspicion and prejudice—some of which they acted out through words and song during an Operation Understanding reception for parents and guests a few weeks ago. A small sample:

Jamie: "I know what it means to be black. How come it seems that the Jews don't know what it means to be Jewish in America?"

Andrew S.: "How come blacks are so lazy? And how come so many are on welfare?"

Johnathan: "Isn't there a Jewish Yellow Pages where they can use their own lawyers and doctors and accountants and only go to stores owned by Jews?"

Emily: "Why are black men so scary?"

Atiba: "How come Jews have all that money? They live the good life. How'd they get all that money anyway?"

Mimi: "How come blacks are such great dancers?"

You get the picture: mistrust, misconceptions, misunderstanding. These youngsters stand out, however, because they chose not to remain smug and comfortable with their hangups. They began meeting several times a month to get to know one another, to talk about each other's culture and history, to learn more about their own. They didn't do it through touchy-feely gab sessions. They got into each other's lives.

They went to Daniela's sister's bat mitzvah; it was Tiba's first time in a synagogue. Mimi went to Tiba's church on Palm Sunday—her first time in a black church. Everyone went to Muhammad's mosque in March.

They called on Capitol Hill and heard D.C. Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton and other black and Jewish members of Congress discuss how they coalesced on legislation. They met with a range of local speakers—as a sign they were long-suffering and up for just about anything, they even endured part of an evening with me. But they also got out of Washington and into communities that would give them a deeper understanding of African American and Jewish cultures and collaborative history.

Before their trip, however, they made a Shabbat dinner together. As youngsters of the '90s, they did it their way: a soul food Shabbat—fully equipped with fried chicken, biscuits, greens, sweet potatoes, and challah, backed by lit candles, recitation of the Motzi and prayer over the wine. What can I say?

And off they went to Crown Heights in Brooklyn—both the Lubavitcher and African American sides—Ellis Island and the Jewish Museum, and places that resonate with civil rights history such as Selma, Montgomery, Birmingham and Charleston.

They had hoped to go to Sengal and Israel, but despite the plate-passing at black churches and donations from foundations, corporations, congregations and individuals, they couldn't raise enough money. Maybe next year in Jerusalem and Dakar.

But a lot was learned at home. Jamie could hardly believe what he heard from Holocaust survivors in Atlanta and New Orleans. The visit to the Charleston plantation made Simone cry uncontrollably. "It was as if all the slaves who lived there came to me all at once," she said. They walked across the Edmund Pettus Bridge and spontaneously began singing "We Shall Overcome."

The Class of 1995 ends in April; a new group of high school juniors begins next month. Class No. 1 still meets monthly, but unlike most of us older folks, they're long past being polite with each other; now they're just honest. That's because after all they've gone through, they know respect and trust each other.

Black nationalists and Jewish chauvinists out there, have no fear: Operation Understanding is a life-changing experience, but racial and religious identities don't get lost.

If anything, these young people now have a stronger sense of themselves and their own history. They cherish both their similarities and differences. It's America's cultural and racial divides they will abide no longer. And no one's going to tell them who can be their friend. These are strong kids. They even think they can change the world.

This is what Operation Understanding's kinetic (no other word for it) president, Karen Kalish, hoped to achieve when she started the D.C. program. The idea came from United Negro College Fund president and former U.S. representative William Gray III; who started Operation Understanding in Philadelphia with George Ross of the American Jewish Committee 10 years ago. The Class of 1995 is the new generation of bridge builders they had in mind.

As the program ended, Jessica, who is Jewish, began singing "Lift Every Voice and Sing." She was joined by the group—as the eyes of many African American parents and guests began to glisten. Then Bridgette, an African American, began "Oseh Shalom"—and Jewish eyes were full. Those tears tell us a lot about our times.

Schmaltzy? Perhaps. But maybe if a few more Operation Understandings had been at work around the globe long ago, President Clinton wouldn't have had to visit Belfast this week, and 20,000 American troops wouldn't be gearing up for Bosnia. We're leaving our youth a pretty scratchy world. But rest assured, as far as Operation Understanding's graduates are concerned, America is going to be okay in their hands.●

RETIREMENT OF JULIAN GRAYSON

● Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, Julian Grayson has retired from service to the Senate. He worked here longer than most of us ever will, and, unlike many of us, he is universally admired and appreciated.

Mr. Grayson was a waiter for the Senate restaurants, and worked on the caucus lunches as well as in the Senators' private dining room. He started here in 1950, but left in 1964 to devote his full time to the Methodist ministry. After a successful career in that calling, he returned to the Senate in 1983 at age 67.

He is a man of great dignity and spirit, and all of us who are fortunate enough to know him know that he is a man of many parts. I will miss our frequent conversations, and hope that he will, too.●

SENATE QUARTERLY MAIL COSTS

● Mr. WARNER. Mr. President, in accordance with section 318 of Public Law 101-520 as amended by Public Law 103-283, I am submitting the frank mail allocations made to each Senator from the appropriation for official mail expenses and a summary tabulation of Senate mass mail costs for the fourth quarter of fiscal year 1995 to be printed in the RECORD. The fourth quarter of fiscal year 1995 covers the period of July 1, 1995, through September 30, 1995. The official mail allocations are available for frank mail costs, as stipulated in Public Law 103-283, the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act for fiscal year 1995.

The material follows: